

RG 34/ Entry 204

File No. 2-24400 & 2-24499

6 AUG 1952

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MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL TWINING

1. This is in response to your request for comments on the "Brownell" report.
2. I believe the first comment should be directed to the question of whether the Joint Chiefs should reply separately, or as a body, to Mr. Lovett. I believe the Chiefs should reply as a body. I understand from General Belling and Admiral Stout that they will so advise General Collins and Admiral Fechteler.
3. I believe the conclusions of the report are in major error on two things. The first major error in its conclusions is that strong central control of the national COMINT effort is desirable. The second is that control under the Secretary of Defense's office rather than under the Joint Chiefs is desirable. I believe that all other recommendations are of minor importance in comparison.
4. Everywhere about us there are proponents of two conflicting ideas of management. There are many who believe completely in the virtues of tight centralized control. There are perhaps more who believe in the virtues of decentralized control. I believe that neither one of these attitudes is correct for COMINT. I believe the COMINT field is particularly vulnerable to danger from either extreme. The basic recommendation made by the Brownell Committee is that the COMINT effort of the nation be centralized with strong control of all aspects vested in AFSA. If this happens, we will lose valuable progress toward the proper evolution of this activity. We will have to return eventually to our present position and start again. I believe the Brownell Committee failed to recognize that the COMINT enterprise requires a very delicate balance between centralization and decentralization. We agree that the present organization does not yet have the correct balance but we are in a position to seek for it and are trying to find it. If the recommendations of the committee are accepted, we will have adopted an extreme which is a retrogression.
5. In addition, placement of this activity under the Office of the Secretary of Defense rather than the Joint Chiefs will aggravate the danger from strong centralized control. It will raise the level of centralized control to where it cannot be modified without great effort. Evolution and any hope of achieving proper balance will be retarded.

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6. The present situation in which COMINT is guided rather than controlled and in which all interested parties participate in that guidance is, I believe, evidence of good evolution so far. This situation was developed under the Joint Chiefs and illustrates that the experience of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in these matters is broad. Keeping COMINT under the Joint Chiefs would not only preserve military control over something that is vital to military success but would likely keep the activity in an atmosphere of proper evolution.

7. I believe the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, has more detailed objections to this report. The Director of Naval Intelligence advocates a compromise proposal that the COMINT organization be set up as a "unified command" under the Joint Chiefs, to follow the established practices for unified commands.

8. Since the Secretary of Defense indicates his general acceptance already of the committee recommendations, it may be that the proposal of the Director of Naval Intelligence is the best possible salvage operation. I believe, however, that the basic requirement is to oppose the principle of strong centralized control. We may seem inconsistent in this because we tend to centralize Air Force COMINT activities in the Air Force Security Service. This causes others to believe that we are against centralized control over us but eager to adopt it from ourselves on down. In answer to this, I would say that there are certain features and areas in COMINT that should be centralized; to what degree we do not yet know. No doubt one may be overcentralized in AFSS. I am firmly convinced of only one thing, which is that strong centralized control of the whole will be a grave mistake which we will have to recover from after losing a great amount of time, energy, and diversified COMINT success.

9. If it appears impossible for the Joint Chiefs of Staff to take a strong stand against any strong central control over COMINT, I suggest that the Navy proposal of a "unified command" under the Joint Chiefs be supported.

✓
JOHN A. SAMFORD
Major General, USAF
Director of Intelligence

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